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FAMINE CAMPAIGN ROUND UP

Here is some material -- late news developments on the famine situation, new facts, suggested promotional ideas for State and County Famine Emergency action, and reports of what is going on in various parts of the country -- for the use of State and county AAA chairmen.

ON INFORMATION FRONT . . . Several items were slated for early mailing to USDA agencies: (a) a fact sheet on how to save by Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics; (b) a collection of human interest stories on plight of starving people; (c) what people in war-torn countries are doing to produce food for themselves, issued as USDA press release 588; (d) quotes on famine emergency by big names; and (e) photostats of famine stories.

These and highlights from all material issued since beginning of campaign have been bundled into a kit to bring members of National Food Emergency Council up to date. Copies of kit will go to State emergency food program managers.

IN THE MILL . . . Information materials in process of preparation: (a) mats of charts comparing per capita calorie consumption by countries, (b) country by country one-page summaries of food situation, (c) 8x10 famine photographs obtained from UNRRA for distribution through State managers, (d) photo layout of typical meals in U. S. and famine countries.

THE FACE OF FAMINE

Tree bark, weeds, cottonseed hulls, are being eaten by starving Chinese in an effort to sustain life, said Dr. Raymond T. Moyer, of the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, upon his recent return from China.

The eating of mud has been reported from some famine areas and elm leaves are another item of diet, according to Dr. Moyer, who is Chief of OFAR's Far Eastern Division.

"We found most of the people sunk in apathy, their faces gray and drawn," he said, in describing a trip through Honan province. They had returned from the mountains -- where they were driven by the Japs -- to find their homes and fields burned. It was winter and they had only summer clothing, no food, no bedding, no shelter. Some were in the fields picking weeds. Many of them must be dead by now."

Country areas are in general worse hit than the cities. Dr. Hoyer said, though bodies of those who had died of the combined effects of malnutrition and disease were often found on Shanghai streets.

Malnutrition is proving fatal to Chinese men and women weakened by lack of food. Typhoid, typhus, and dysentery are prevalent and smallpox is also found, according to the OFAR representative.

(Source: Hoyer, OFAR)

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It was all in a day's work, the American soldier bitterly concluded as he watched the old Belgian lady systematically go about her ridding of the garbage can in Antwerp. Not only today and yesterday, but tomorrow and for a great many tomorrows...tomorrows that made up the whole of the foreseeable future. But what made it all the worse was the presence of the lean and mangy dog that was competing with the aged woman for the potato peels and the already well-gnawed bones. Neither dog nor woman paid attention to the presence of the other -- both were on the same level of starvation.

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There weren't many children of less than three years to be seen in either Belgium or Holland, GI's told each other in some surprise, and then they wondered where they had gone....but not for long, because a little reflection on facts known to every soldier told the story. Most of them were either confined to their hovel-like homes because they lacked the energy and strength to play in the streets and fields, or dead. The death rate among the new-born babies is high, but also hard hit are two other elements in the population -- the old and the youngsters. Many of the next generation who do manage somehow to survive will live out short spans of life as stunted adults.

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You can buy wooden shoes in Antwerp. Wizen'd little old men of eight or nine years sell them -- in front of Army bivouac areas where live the people with money and food. But they don't want to sell for money -- the money that so often can buy nothing with which to sustain life -- they want to sell for food. A candy bar. A Kration box will buy quite a few shoes. Not that money isn't of value -- some value. You can use it to buy potato peels. If you can find the peels.

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(Source: Lt. James Keegan, USDA employee whosaw war service with Quartermaster Corps in Belgium and Holland.)

FARMERS BEAT ALL-OUT PRODUCTION GOALS

American farmers are responding to the world cry for food by producing another year of all-out crop production.

The spring planting intentions reports collected by the Department of Agriculture reveal that farmers intend to plant 107,350,000 acres in the principal crop for 1946 harvest -- an increase of 150,000 acres over last year.

However, there are still some important crops where the intentions indicate that plantings may fall short of the goals. State and County committees are urged to check on intentions for their own areas and find any "weak" spots.

Bright spots in the crop picture include wheat, oats, peanuts, tobacco and rice, while crops lagging behind the goals at present are soybeans, sorghums, barley, soybeans, flax, white and sweet potatoes, dry beans and peas.

Hopes are that corn plantings -- chief feed grain at present -- will increase further as will the oil crops -- soybeans, dry beans, peas and flax. New price supports on some crops when called to the attention of farmers, may result in increased acreages.

(Source: Crop Report on Prospective Plantings for 1946. USDA, March 29, 1946.)

EUROPE TRIES TO FEED ITSELF

Vigorous measures are being taken by the people of war-torn countries to produce food for themselves.

The people of the countries where the specter of hunger has appeared are fighting a valiant food battle against enormous difficulties. Farmers are planting maximum acreages of food crops, and city people are planting gardens in plots outside cities and towns.

War destroyed most of the motor power equipment of European farmers, with the result that they are forming collective labor pools in which everyone able to wield a hoe is working. Horses and oxen are being spared and in some cases, human plow teams are being formed.

Besides the draft power shortage, European farmers will be hampered in 1946 by lack of transportation, fertilizer, and feed grains.

In some parts of China and other Far Eastern areas, people are continuing their practice of cultivating every available patch of earth. Parts of China not subject to Jap occupation are in the best shape. Extensive efforts have been made to increase production by new irrigation projects, improved seeds, more extensive winter cropping, and better insect and pest control.

(Source: USDA 588-46, March 20, 1946)

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EVEN ENGLISH DIETS INADEQUATE

Usually, England is looked upon -- as in fact it is -- as one of the most fortunate nations in Europe from a food standpoint. But even in the "tight little Isle" food supplies are at a bare minimum, according to a Washington war bride, Mrs. J. J. Libert.

"I haven't had my hair cut in four years -- it just hasn't grown because of deficiencies in my diet," was her summary of the English food situation.

The English diet at present is even stricter than during the war, she said. As a result "people are always tired."

The present English ration for one person to last one week is: 3 ounces of bacon; 3 ounces of cheese, 2 ounces of tea; 2 ounces of butter and of margarine, one ounce of fat, 6 ounces of sugar, half pound of meat. Milk is available at the rate of half a pint per day, and each person gets one egg every two or three weeks.

(Source: Washington Post; State Dept. correspondence)

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OPA ACTS TO SPEED FAMINE EMERGENCY MEASURES

Following immediately the recommendations of the President's Famine Emergency Committee, the OPA has authorized producers, during the emergency period, to reduce the weight of loaves of bread and the units of bread-type rolls up to 10 percent without a corresponding decrease in price ceilings. This removes any price control block to immediate action on the Committee's suggestions to bakers.

(Source: OPA Press Release 6311, March 15, 1946)

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- ** conservation pledges obtained through the press, radio, civic clubs, etc. Special editions of newspapers may also be made around this idea. A good place to start in the states is with the State Press Association - in counties, see local editors.
- **Contests with prizes for the best suggestions on ways of saving food, recipes, etc., may be run through both press and radio. Prizes to be supplied by local merchants.
- **The help of state and local Boy, Girl Scouts, Red Cross, service clubs might be enlisted to set up booths in Department stores, town squares to demonstrate how to save on wheat foods made in the homes. Home economics teachers and classes to provide the know-how. Food saving pledge booths could be operated in conjunction with this.
- **Theaters might also install lobby pledge booths. Civic organizations could be induced to sponsor pledge rallies with varied speaking and entertainment programs.

The Need For Food Abroad

- **local veterans provide a good source of specific information on food conditions abroad. Ex-G.I.'s who saw war-torn Europe and Asia may be interviewed for special articles to local papers and magazines. Also, consider the possibilities of putting one or more on the radio or on the speaking program at community meetings of all kinds.
- **Every community has people with relatives in Europe. They probably have resumed their correspondence after years of mail black-out. Here is a chance to get first-hand descriptions of post-war food problems in Europe. Getting folks who receive such letters to read them on the air is one possibility, having them include such material in newspaper stories is another.

News Story Possibilities for States and Counties

The red-hot continued story - in the big papers, in the weeklies, on the radio - is the concrete evidence of what your State or your County is doing to share food with starving people.

Keep a running record insofar as possible of the wheat, fats and oils, livestock feed, or any other food ingredient saved.

Make regular reports to the public to let folks know that sacrifices are being made in their community and in their State.

We assume that it has already been announced that State FFA Directors and County AAA chairmen have been named emergency food program managers. This announcement undoubtedly contained background on the need for this emergency food program.

1. The next story should be the announcement of the people (and their affiliations) nominated to serve as State or County Famine Relief Food Committees (or whatever name is chosen). Again, background plugs (fresh material) for the program, but not too much. Make this local.

2. Then, a fill-in story on the first meeting of these committees with assignment of duties to each member and a brief description of what parts of the food conservation program each member will work for and why it is necessary - e.g., local cafe owner to contact members of the restaurant association and secure their understanding of and cooperation with economies in conduct of public eating places.

3. Then, a follow-up on what various members report - e.g., that the cafe owners of Pottsville have unanimously decided to cut bread servings, pastry desserts, etc. and quotes of appreciation for this phase of program and need for it, etc.

4. At this point, interviews with members of the public and their reaction to the program as it bumps into them - i. e., reaction of typical housewife to smaller loaf of bread, reaction of Big Eater in restaurant as he gets fruit instead of apple pie for dessert. This could be done under a general round-up by the State or County Chairman with an overall praise for the "warm and ready response, etc."

5. Then, as the operation of the community committees gets in full swing, news stories of meetings of non-trade groups (citizen groups, rather) with plenty of Mr. Average Man participation in quotes, resolutions, specific action examples. Illustration: - meeting of church layman's league called and presided over by State or County member of Famine Relief Food Committee. Brief quotes of chairman's introductory speech in which one or more of immediate-need examples can be used. THEN, most of the story to be given over to talks from the floor from members of the group who have been in the Army and returned to civil life - their eye-witness accounts of starvation have a local interest punch that can't be beat.

6. Feature story - of human interest related to the campaign. Example: Little girl comes to local grocer with small sack of flour mother had given her to make cookies.

Working With Community Groups

Supplying material to church groups: Ministers of all denominations are receptive to the food needs of the world. If supplied with facts and examples of human suffering, many will build sermons about the subject.Also, why not church famine relief dinners sponsored by the church ladies? The dinners could be billed as examples of food conservation meals that parishioners might follow.

Displays in windows of local merchants: Built around photographs sent by the Department and supplemented by meal display featuring conservation foods. Main themes (1) the need in terms of starving children, (2) how the average person can help meet the need by individual saving. Use specific items to show the contrast of our 3,400-calory diet, and theirs of 1,000 calories.

School promotion through teachers and P.T.A. groups: Most are eager to get fact material and examples of human suffering because of their interest in children.

Keep representatives of groups assisting with program informed -- with information you have and with reports of activities of other groups and the general progress of the campaign in your State or county.

They're On The Ball

You can't beat it -- local initiative. When you're close to the people who really carry the ball, your ideas are sharp, practical and quick on the "carry out." Here's what some of the States have started on their own initiative....

Realizing that this will need active participation by Mr. and Mrs. America, Vermont's Manager reports that he has formed a 150-man State-wide Vermont Emergency Famine Committee with people in all walks of life as members.... Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and others have done about the same. Committees of around 100 community leaders are spreading the story, organizing others....

All New England States are planning house-to-house food conservation pledge campaigns.... New York has contacted State educational leaders.... one result will be picture spread in magazine going to all teachers and P.T.A. groups.

Pennsylvania is supplying the State Ministerial Association with Famine Facts for pulpit and meeting use.

Indiana County Managers will meet on March 25 to discuss general outlines of the campaign and make plans... meeting will be featured by showing of 16mm. famine films which will also be available for county use.... Minnesota will hold a similar meeting on March 29, also using films and with blown-up famine pictures and posters. Other North Central States are moving along the same lines.

Alabama reports that Program Managers are holding meetings in all parts of the State with food advisory committees and restaurant operators associations to enlist their support of the food conservation measures... In Oklahoma, all county managers will hold county-wide meetings of interested citizens, and the State Council has set as the sooner goal the conservation of one million bushels of wheat and 6 and a half million pounds of edible fats and oils in the next 120 days.... A better Gardens campaign is also under way and school authorities, press and radio outlets, colleges and farm organizations have all been contacted.

Six meetings in various parts of Georgia have already been held by the State Manager and advisory committee formed. On March 22 and March 26, meetings will be held in every Georgia County to bring popular support behind the program.

